

SENATE No. 791

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Liz Miranda

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to nature as a prescription.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/21/2025</i>
<i>Rob Consalvo</i>	<i>14th Suffolk</i>	<i>9/30/2025</i>

SENATE No. 791

By Ms. Miranda, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 791) of Liz Miranda and Mindy Domb for legislation relative to nature as a prescription for mental health services. Financial Services.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to nature as a prescription.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 32A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 33. The commission shall provide to any active or retired employee of the
4 commonwealth who is insured under the group insurance commission coverage for accessing
5 nature as a medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to section 42E of chapter 112, as mental
6 health services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of said chapter 112 and as social
7 rehabilitation services when referred pursuant to section 42G of said chapter 112.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 112 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
9 inserting after section 42D the following 3 sections:- Section 42E. Any person authorized to
10 prescribe or dispense of controlled substances pursuant to section 9 of chapter 94C may, when
11 acting in accordance with any provision of this chapter and in good faith and in the course of a
12 professional practice for the alleviation of pain and suffering or for the treatment or alleviation of

13 disease, prescribe outdoor time for accessing nature as may reasonably be required for the
14 purpose of patient treatment.

15 Section 42F. Any persons licensed in the Commonwealth to provide counseling or other
16 mental health services pursuant to this chapter may, when acting in accordance with any
17 provision of this chapter and in good faith and in the course of a professional practice for the
18 treatment or alleviation of mental health symptoms, prescribe outdoor time for accessing nature
19 as may reasonably be required for the purpose of client treatment.

20 Section 42G. Any persons licensed to provide social services to individuals experiencing
21 social or emotional trauma including, but not limited to, job loss, divorce, food insecurity,
22 immigration or probation may, when acting in good faith and in the course of a professional
23 practice to meet the needs of community members, refer clients to outdoor time for accessing
24 nature as may reasonably be beneficial to their social rehabilitation.

25 SECTION 3. Chapter 118E of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
26 inserting after section 10Q the following section:-

27 Section 10R. The division and its contracted health insurers, health plans, health
28 maintenance organizations, behavioral health management firms and third-party administrators
29 under contract to a Medicaid managed care organization or primary care clinician plan shall
30 provide coverage for accessing nature as a medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to
31 section 42E of chapter 112, as mental health services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of
32 said chapter 112 and as social rehabilitation services when referred pursuant to section 42G of
33 said chapter 112.

34 SECTION 4. Section 7 of Chapter 132A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
35 amended by adding the following paragraph:-

36 Notwithstanding the provisions of the first paragraph, the commissioner shall waive all
37 fees and other charges for the parking of vehicles and for the enjoyment of other special
38 privileges within the territory under the control of the division for those individuals enrolled in
39 MassHealth.

40 SECTION 5. Chapter 175 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
41 inserting after section 47TT the following section:-

42 Section 47UU. An individual policy of accident, sickness or mental health insurance
43 issued under section 108 that provides hospital expense, surgical expense or mental health
44 expense insurance or a group blanket or general policy of accident, sickness or mental health
45 insurance issued under section 110 that provides hospital expense, surgical expense or mental
46 health insurance that is issued or renewed within or without the commonwealth shall provide
47 coverage for accessing nature as a medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to section 42E of
48 chapter 112, as mental health services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of said chapter
49 112 and as social rehabilitation services when referred pursuant to section 42G of said chapter
50 112.

51 SECTION 6. Chapter 176A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
52 inserting after section 8UU the following section:-

53 Section 8VV. Any contract between a subscriber and the corporation under an individual
54 or group hospital service plan that is delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth
55 shall provide coverage for accessing nature as a medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to

56 section 42E of chapter 112, as mental health services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of
57 said chapter 112 and as social rehabilitation services when referred pursuant to section 42G of
58 said chapter 112.

59 SECTION 7. Chapter 176B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
60 inserting after section 4UU the following section:-

61 Section 4VV. A subscription certificate under an individual or group medical or mental
62 health service agreement delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth shall provide
63 coverage for accessing nature as a medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to section 42E of
64 chapter 112, as mental health services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of said chapter
65 112 and as social rehabilitation services when referred pursuant to section 42G of said chapter
66 112.

67 SECTION 8. Chapter 176G of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
68 inserting after section 4MM the following section:-

69 Section 4NN. An individual or group health maintenance contract that is issued or
70 renewed within or without the commonwealth shall provide coverage for accessing nature as a
71 medical treatment when prescribed pursuant to section 42E of chapter 112, as mental health
72 services when prescribed pursuant to section 42F of said chapter 112 and as social rehabilitation
73 services when referred pursuant to section 42G of said chapter 112.

74 SECTION 9. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the
75 commissioner of the department of public health and the commissioner of the department of
76 conservation and recreation shall jointly review existing programs and budgets to identify
77 opportunities for collaboration on developing and implementing outdoor environmental,

78 ecological, agricultural and other natural resource or outdoor-based therapy programs. This
79 review shall include evaluation of the equitable access to existing natural resource areas and
80 strategies for ensuring that black, indigenous and people of color, environmental justice and
81 other underrepresented community members feel safe and welcome when visiting these natural
82 resource areas.

83 (b) The commissioner of the department of public health and the commissioner of the
84 department of conservation and recreation shall jointly submit a report of their review and
85 findings by filing the report with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate not
86 later than September 30, 2024.

87 SECTION 10. This act shall be known as the H.E.R.O. Nurturing Center Making Nature
88 Prescriptive Act